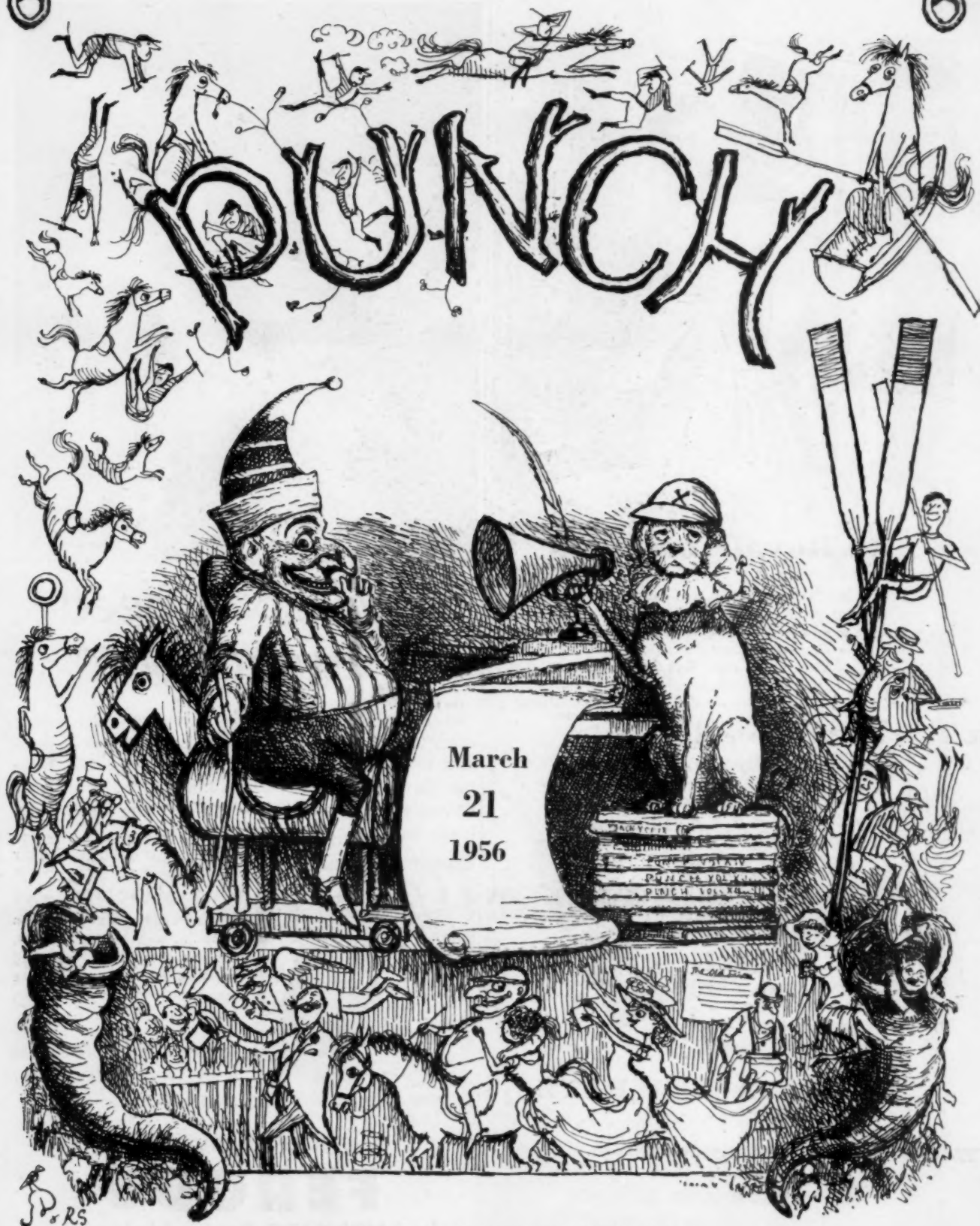


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PUNCH or The London Charivari—March 21 1956

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By Royal Command

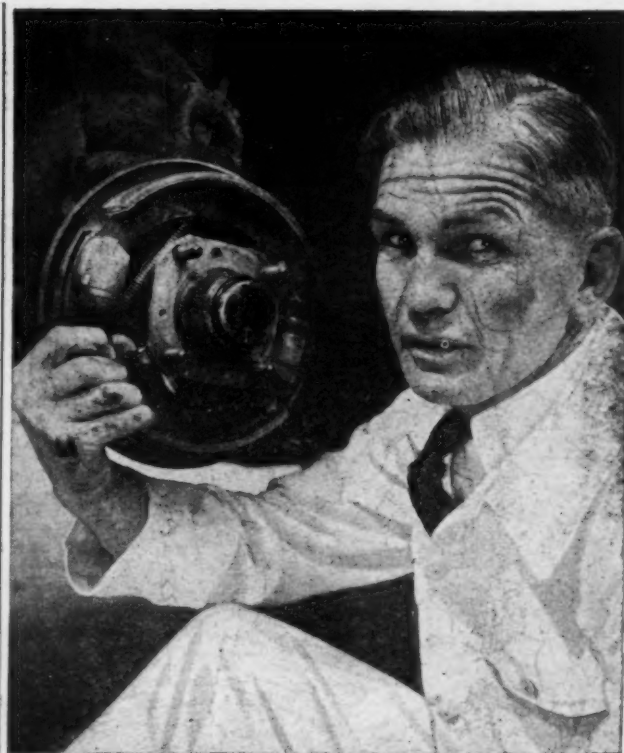
'Take a shop,' said the Prince, and Mr. Marcovitch, who, a hundred years ago, was making his cigarettes in an obscure room near Piccadilly knew that their excellence had made him famous. Ever since, Marcovitch Cigarettes have been made to the same high standards as won the approval of that Eminent Personage and his friends; they are rolled of the very finest tobacco, for the pleasure of those whose palates appreciate perfection.



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"We don't need a crystal ball"

"When a garage man tells you that regular brake testing every 2,500 miles will save you money—and maybe save your life—he's not guessing or crystal gazing. His training, his experience have taught him that badly adjusted brakes waste the life of linings and sometimes score brake drums. Make sure your car is safe . . .

ask your garage to check your brakes now!"



That's the advice of a man you can trust . . . a garage man. When, eventually your brakes need re-lining, he'll use a product he can trust—Ferodo Anti-Fade Brake Linings.

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 SAVE MONEY**

See your garage about
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ANTI-FADE Brake Linings



the things they say!



*Those people made a pile of money last year.
Not a lot, in relation to the size of their business !
Maybe not. But why couldn't they let their customers have
a bigger share in this prosperity by lower or level prices ?
You talk as if I.C.I. haven't kept their prices down.
Well, have they ?*



*Certainly. The general level of wholesale prices in this country is more than
three times pre-war, but the general level of I.C.I.'s prices is less than double.*



*Still, I don't see what I.C.I. want all that money for.
Much of it went into extending and re-equipping their hundred-odd
factories and constructing plants for entirely new products.
Who benefits from that ?*

*Everybody. I.C.I.'s employees, because they get the increased security
that an up-to-date industry gives ; I.C.I.'s stockholders, because these new plants
will increase the Company's earning power. Finally, I.C.I.'s customers, at home and abroad,
for the policy of continuously improving manufacturing methods
and increasing capacity is important not only in making more
materials available to industry, but also in
keeping prices down.*





Simply lovely

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Ask your retailer to let you see the new Westbury range which includes full and three-quarter length coats. They are very lovely.



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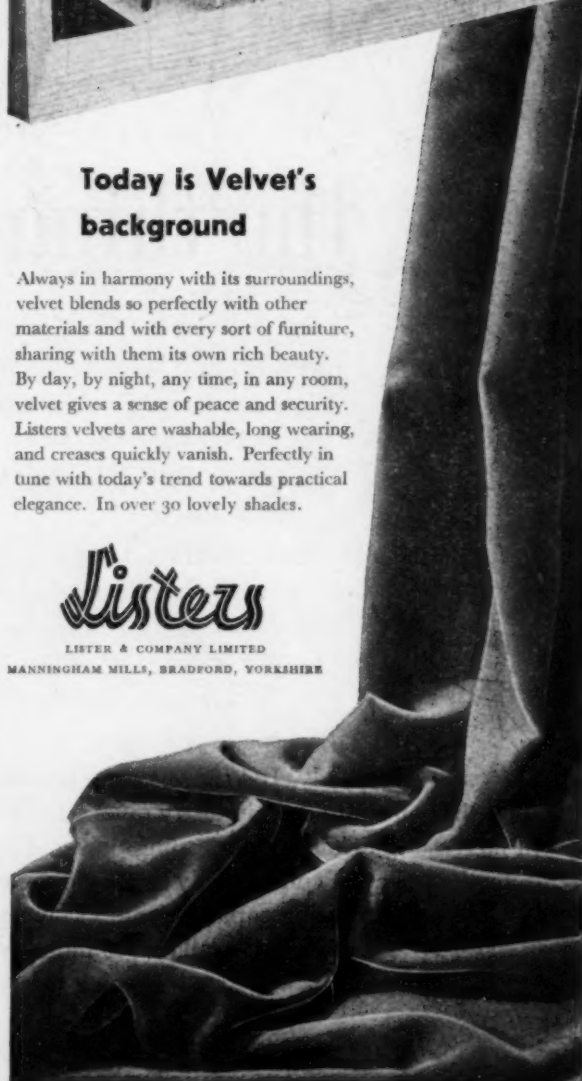


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Always in harmony with its surroundings, velvet blends so perfectly with other materials and with every sort of furniture, sharing with them its own rich beauty. By day, by night, any time, in any room, velvet gives a sense of peace and security. Lister's velvets are washable, long wearing, and creases quickly vanish. Perfectly in tune with today's trend towards practical elegance. In over 30 lovely shades.

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Shell Nature Studies 15 BEETLES

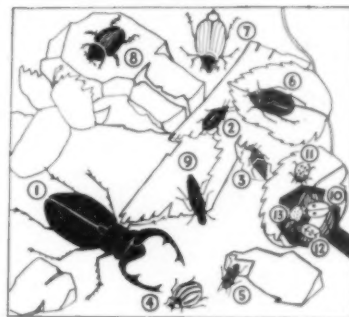
PAINTED BY TRISTRAM HILLIER



In Britain there are more than 3,600 kinds of beetle. One of the largest is the STAG BEETLE (1) of southern England. Only the male has the antler. Among the prettiest are the RED-HEADED CARDINAL (2), which delights in sunshine (like an allied Cardinal with a black head to his scarlet body); the WASP BEETLE (3); the CORN CHRYSOLINE (4), a rare beetle of North Wales; the GREEN TIGER (5); and the ROSE CHAFER (6), which feeds poetically on rose petals.

The Rose Chafer's less attractive cousins include the destructive COCKCHAFER (7), and the sturdy, inch-long DUMBLE-DOR or LOUSY WATCHMAN (8), which goes humming through the autumn dusk in search of cowpats. This is the beetle of Gray's *Elegy*. Grim and smelly, but another welcome scavenger, is the DEVIL'S COACH-HORSE (9), which twists its tail over its back when provoked.

Ladybirds (i.e. birds of Our Lady) are delightfully vivid on leaf and stem, where they feed usefully on aphids. Everybody knows the TWO-SPOT LADYBIRD (10) and the SEVEN-SPOT LADYBIRD (11). Those with black markings on yellow wing-cases, such as the FOURTEEN-SPOT LADYBIRD (12) and the TWENTY-TWO-SPOT LADYBIRD (13), are less common.



You can be sure of



The Key to the Countryside

Shell's monthly guide to wild flowers, which gave so many people pleasure, is published in book form by Phoenix House Ltd., 38 William IV St., W.C.2, at 6/6 plus 4d. postage.



MARGARET LOCKWOOD the famous star, is appearing in the Agatha Christie play 'SPIDER'S WEB' (now well into its second year) at the Savoy Theatre, London. Julia 'Toots' Lockwood, following in her mother's footsteps, is already launched on her film career. She is appearing in the latest Herbert Wilcox film "MY TEEN-AGE DAUGHTER". For Julia's birthday, Margaret Lockwood gave her daughter a Parker '51' with a Rolled Gold Cap.

Margaret Lockwood gave her daughter Julia a Parker '51' for her birthday



NOW — the matching '51' Ballpoint

In exquisite elegance and performance, in precision of workmanship and design, the Parker '51' Ballpoint is a fitting companion to the famous '51' pen.

The '51' Ballpoint has five times the usual writing capacity, and rotating ball-seat action to ensure even wear and constant ink flow. Its sliding cap extends and retracts the ball. Choice of 4 colours.

PRICE:	
ROLLED GOLD CAP	54/-
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Available with matching '51' pen.	

and—NEW The Parker Duofold Ballpoint

In colours to match the Duofold range, 21/-, A counterpart in perfection of finish and style, to these famous models:

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Duofold Ballpoint or Pencil to match all these 21/-		

NOW MORE THAN EVER—A GRACIOUS COMPLIMENT

Rare, costly nib-point—exclusive electro-polishing process

The elegance of the Parker '51', its distinction and graceful proportions—these are as universally admired as its fine craftsmanship. Today, in its latest form, it is a gift more desired than ever—a yet more gracious compliment.

The nib-point is now made of Plathanium, our own creation—an alloy of the rare and costly metals, Platinum and Ruthenium.

Every Parker '51' is tipped with Plathanium, electro-polished by our own exclusive process more highly than is possible with any other nib-point material.

It's so wear-resistant that years of writing cannot alter it; the nib that writes so smoothly today will write just as smoothly, with just the width of line you like, for many years to come.

For that very special occasion, consider this latest Parker '51' with Rolled Gold Cap. It's a very special gift. Choice of 4 colours and 8 different nib grades. Price (Rolled Gold Cap) 108/- (Rolled Silver Cap) 96/-, (Lustraloy Cap) 84/8.

'51' Pen with matching '51' Ballpoint or Pencil		
ROLLED GOLD CAPS	£8.3.3	Ballpoint or pencil alone 54/-
ROLLED SILVER CAPS	£7.5.3	Ballpoint or pencil alone 48/-
LUSTRALOY CAPS	£6.7.9	Ballpoint or pencil alone 42/-

Parker '51'

The world's most wanted pen

GIVEN AND USED BY FAMOUS PEOPLE



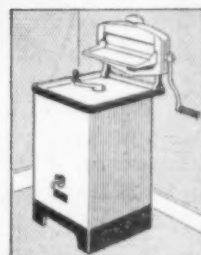
...and that's that!

The washing is done, and out to dry, hours earlier if you call on Mr. Therm to help you. He offers you a choice of simple, sturdy and good-looking gas-heated washing machines (with power-driven agitators and wringers if you like) which will take the worst of wash-day drudgery off your hands. And his easy terms are easy enough to suit every

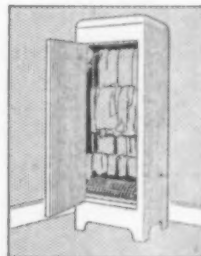
pocket! Come and see a selection of them at your gas showrooms—next Tuesday, when the bother of wash-day is still fresh in your mind!

* * *

P.S. Mr. Therm also supplies gas-heated drying cabinets which will make you completely independent of drying weather. Come and see them. Remember—there are really easy hire-purchase terms on all gas appliances.



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The gas-heated cabinet gives you midsummer drying weather all the year round. Running costs and upkeep costs negligible.



GAS—to be sure



"I've got a lot of Fords"

says young Smith

ON THE GRASSY BANK of the local by-pass, young Smith is discovering that one in every four new vehicles is built by Ford of Dagenham. (Dagenham produces 25% of British vehicles sold overseas, too). Impressive figures. More impressive still when you realise what a vast contribution Ford products make to our way of life and prosperity. Fordson tractors, by increasing farming productivity help to feed

Britain . . . Thames Vans and Trucks minimise transport costs on the goods you buy . . . Ford cars provide better, lower-cost motoring for every class of motorist. Overseas, Ford products are steady earners of the currency which settles Britain's bills for essential imports. And, with expansion to meet world demand, the benefits brought by British Ford products will soon be greater than ever.

"There'll be many more tomorrow" say



of Dagenham



FORD PRODUCTS — THE BEST AT LOWEST COST



NOT one among the many Middle East experts bursting into print during current crises commented on the cheering implications of Mr. Selwyn Lloyd's experience on leaving Bahrain. After all, if rioters pile rocks across the only road to the airport it does rather flatteringly suggest that they don't want you to go.

At the Gallop

THE value of the promised new equipment for the railways, says the Minister of Transport, will be its benefit to the travelling public which will result from the boosted morale of the British Rail-



ways staff. It is good to see this fresh, psychological approach to things, and the public feels confident of more and earlier deliveries when the postmen get their double-breasted hacking jackets.

Willow, Willow

IN these days of short-tempered diplomacy and all-round intransigence it was like a breath of old-world charm to come across the words "Expressions of regret and apology" . . . "Greatly perturbed" . . . "Deplore this unfortunate incident" . . . "Deeply concerned" . . . in the course of recent international exchanges. But it was only the M.C.C. addressing the Pakistan cricketers.

Paying Guests?

THE *Sunday Times* report that Marshal Bulganin and Mr. Khrushchev may bring an offer of an interest-free loan of £1,000,000,000 in gold when they arrive in London next month is thought to be only a rumour. A little something

would not be out of place, however: just to reimburse the taxpayer for the cost of banquets, bodyguards and bunting.

Peg Wanted

ADVERTISED as "the cloth that conquered Everest," a British raincoat material has scored a double triumph, by capturing record business in the United States and by earning the approval of a newspaper diarist—who recommends other firms to find their way into the American pocket by tying their publicity to our national achievements. For instance, what brand of shirt enabled Mr. Twiss to fly at 1,132 m.p.h.?

Something Coming

SOMEONE loosed off a bland phrase in the report by an international aeronautics organization which met recently to discuss traffic congestion caused over the Atlantic by three hundred aircraft flying the same routes at a time. The situation could cause delays, it was said, "or some other inconvenience."

THIS WEEK'S PUNCH

Once more we have to apologise for an issue of less than the normal size. The only part of *Punch* which does not suffer from the printing dispute is the coloured advertisement pages; all the rest is produced in emergency conditions and inevitably falls below the standard we would like to attain. Every effort is being made to produce as good a paper as possible in the circumstances, and we ask our readers' indulgence until the end of the dispute allows us to return to normal conditions.

No News

SOME sympathy will be felt with the businessman who glanced through his paper in the Brighton train one afternoon last week and, after frowning over the car industry, restrictive practices, the Russian visit, Glubb Pasha, floods on the Danube, M. Pineau, Cyprus,

Eisenhower's heart and the T.U.C., turned irritably to a companion and said: "What became of the feller who kept finding people tied to his door-knocker?"

Tanner Extra?

READERS of a Sunday causerie felt cheated recently when they were told about a Mayfair shop whose ostrich-leather shoes at thirty-five guineas are "so much in demand that many clients find it cheaper to bring their own skins." The price for shoes in this material wasn't quoted.

Manner of Speaking

IN present unpromising industrial conditions it is consoling to remember that the word "sack" will never be heard again. The nearest hint at such violent measures was given recently by



a Yorkshire employer, who announced his decision to dispense with a number of hands by explaining that "redundancy was involved."

Natural Camouflage

RAILWAY officials say that weeks of work and incalculable expenditure will be made necessary by the damage done to rolling stock after the Everton v. Manchester City match, when doors and windows were smashed, dozens of light bulbs removed and luggage racks pulled away from the wall. As an alternative to repairs, it has been suggested that the coaches might be transferred to the Southend-Fenchurch Street line; judging from reports, they would pass unnoticed there.

Edgware, Sledge-wear

By PAUL DEHN

THAT Protean revue-artist, Max Adrian, is currently singing a lyric in which every line ends with the rhyme *-ility*; and it makes me hopping mad to think that I've spent half a lifetime ransacking my putrescent brain for revue *ideas*, when all I needed to do was buy a rhyming dictionary and let my subject-matter be dictated by the rhymes assembled in any one particular section.

So now I have bought a rhyming dictionary, and sure enough am already gravid with inspiration after no more than a cursory glance at the very first section of all, which concerns rhymes in *-AH*. These are Ah (though I could have told them that), baa, bah, blah, ha, la, ma, pa, Shah, ta, faux-pas, holla, hurrah, mamma, papa, *plat*, algebra, cinema and fistula.

The words crystallize instantly into the outline of a deliciously risqué sketch. Against a Persian-garden backdrop appear two British tourists: a comic Refined Girl who calls her mother "mamma" and her father "papa," and spends her evenings learning algebra; and a comic Unrefined Girl who commits the faux-pas of saying "Ma" and "Pa," spends her evenings in the cinema and thinks algebra a lot of blah. They are both being banqueted by an enamoured Shah (with a fistula). He calls "Holla!" to a slave, who enters with a Persian lamb which says "Baa!", before the slave slaughters it and lays it at their feet on the floor.

The Shah, by way of testing the girls' respective eligibility for his harem, bids them pick whichever portions of this traditional *plat* they most prefer—with

their fingers. "La!" says the Refined Girl and takes a bit of best end. "Ta!" says the Unrefined Girl, and takes the lamb's wool coat. "Hurrah!" says the Shah, draping it round her shapely shoulders and easing her on to his divan. Blackout. It's as easy as that.

What's more, every single lyric-writer in the West End except me seems to have found it so. Look at the rhymes under *-ENACE*: "I'm *Dennis*, the *menace* of *Venice*." Surely I've heard *that* before—and if I haven't, I'd better hurry up and write it myself or someone very soon will. And how about *-ENA*? I'll bet some hack like Noel Coward has any number of numbers up his ravelled sleeve about Lena from Pasadena who played a scena in the arena at Modena on the concertina and the ocarina—dressed as a Tsarina and supported (as any fool with a rhyming dictionary can extemporaneously envisage) by a semolina-fed hyena.

Never mind. There are still thousands of other rhyme-assemblies (like druid and fluid; or goosey, juicy, Lucy, sluicy, Debussy and *retroussé*) whose tractability may not yet have become apparent to ears less subtle and intuitive than my own. Indeed some of the words are so *recherché* that even I have had to look them up in a non-rhyming dictionary, before proceeding with my projects for the coming theatrical season. These projects include:

1. A sidesplitting little lyric about the eccentric gastronome who got borax and storax (a fragrant gum-resin) stuck in his thorax. Though formerly placid, he became at first flaccid through excess of acid and then fracid (rotten through

over-ripeness). Crudish, dudish, lewdish, rudish and nudish, he finally did something quite unmentionable (to the prudish) with a stew-dish.

2. A coruscatingly macabre patter-song about poor, afflicted Jabez whose babies not only had rabies and scabies but were also gabies (simpletons). Worse: in addition to being rabid, they were tabid (marcid, withered, stricken with wasting disease)—in contradistinction to their father whose only blemish was that he was phlegmish.

3. For the Windmill: a witty solo-burlesque about a strip-tease artist—strapless, wrapless, and hapless because chapless. Her name was Brenda and she finally surrendered to someone of the opposite gender in a moment of splendour against the drawing-room fender.

4. For the Irving: an intellectual quick-foxtrot about how Darwin introduced an aposiopesis into the exegesis of his thesis on the Origin of Species; and a stinging political satire in which a Fabian is shown the economic error of his ways by an Arabian's symbolic manipulation of a gabion (a wicker basket of cylindrical shape *open at both ends*).

The least helpful entries in the dictionary are those dissyllabic rhymes which peter out in a vague injunction to "extend" etymologically unextendable monosyllables. *Viz*:

-OTTEN, -OTTON

cotton, gotten, hot 'un, and extend
-OT for "rotten" etc.

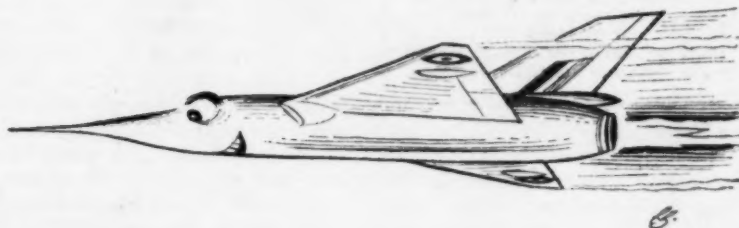
That "etc." is a euphemism. I plunge trustingly into *-OT*, extend it, and come up wreathed with such arcane Old High German accretions as blotten, clotten, potten, slotten, snotten, spotten, squatten, swatten, trodden, yachten, Alder-shotten, apricotten, bergamotten, gallipotten, garotten, gavotten and idioten—all of which would doubtless roll them in the aisles on a wet Saturday night at the *Preussische Staatstheater* but are frankly unserviceable in London's West End.

There remain, finally, the very few rhyme-assemblies which defy my lyrical synthesis:

-AGSHIP

flagship, hagship.

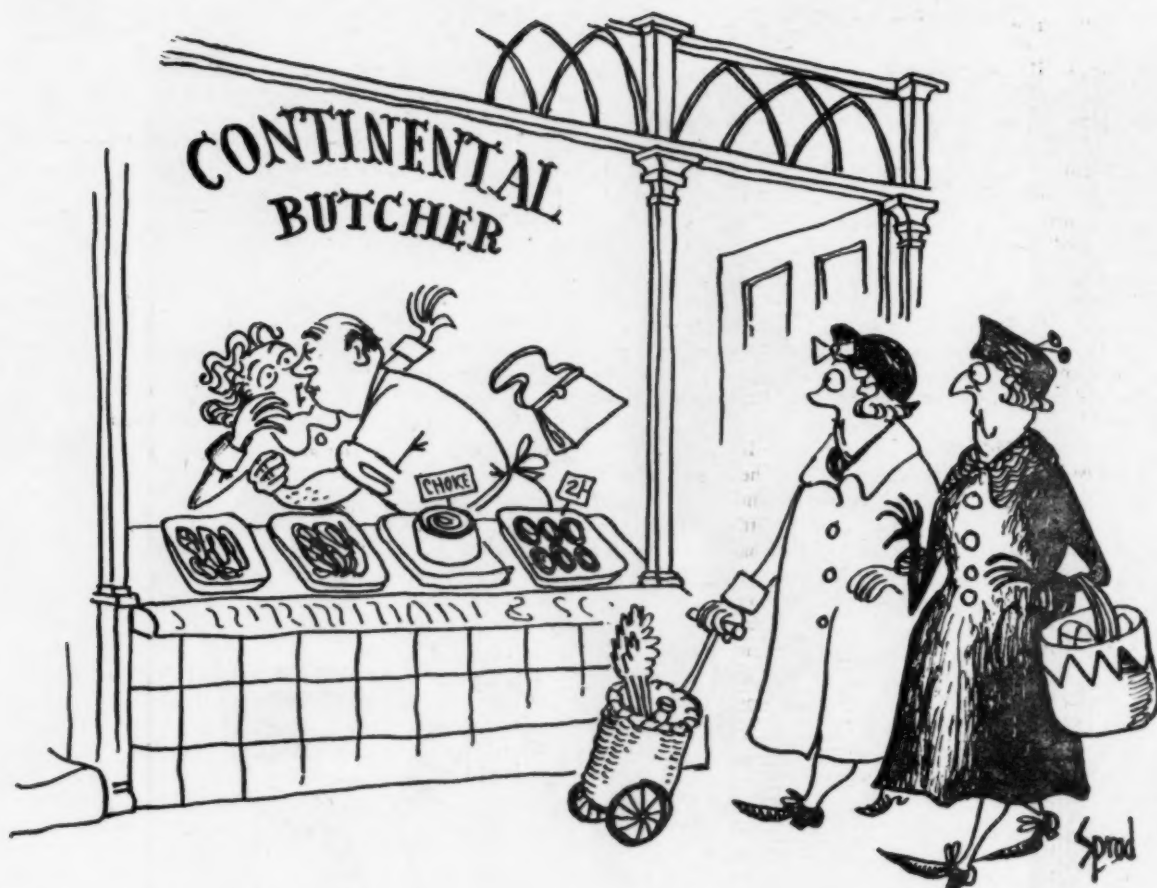
Mr. Coward, who understands Admirals and their wives, is welcome to that one.



"That must be Eastbourneseafordnewhavenbrightonworthinoghonor."



MARK ANTONY EDEN: *"I am dying, Egypt, dying."*



Kind Words for Shakespeare

By P. G. WODEHOUSE

I SEE in the paper that a woman in Chicago has been saying in an interview that she finds Shakespeare "grossly materialistic and much over-rated" and "greatly prefers P. G. Wodehouse." Well, it is not for me to say whether she is right or not; one cannot arbitrate in these matters of taste. Shakespeare's stuff is different from mine, but that is not to say that it is inferior. There are passages in Shakespeare to which I would have been quite pleased to put my name. That "Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow" thing. Some spin on the ball there. The man may have been grossly materialistic, but in my opinion he had the stuff.

One of the things people should remember when they compare Shakespeare with me and hand him the short straw is that he did not have my

advantages. He came along too early to get the benefit of the guidance of the critics who today are wriggling all over the place as if one had turned over a flat stone. There was nobody then to tell him he was writing all wrong. Occasionally someone would call him Shakescene or Johannes Factotum and say he had a tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, but that really got him nowhere. One cannot say what a man of his undoubted gifts might not have done with John Wain or Daniel George to advise him.

Another way in which I get the edge on Shakespeare is that I have privacy for my work. When I write a novel I sit down on the old trouser-seat and write it. I may have to break off at intervals to get up and let the foxhound out and let the foxhound in and let the cat out and let the cat in and let the senior Peke out and let the senior Peke in and let the

junior Peke out and let the junior Peke in and then let the cat out again, but nobody interrupts me, nobody comes breathing down the back of my neck and asks me how I am getting on. But Shakespeare never had a moment to himself. If it wasn't Bacon, Marlowe, the Earl of Oxford and the Countess of Pembroke bursting in and wanting to collaborate, it was Burbage.

Burbage, I imagine, was his worst pain in the neck. Even today a dramatic author suffers from managers, but in Shakespeare's time anybody who got mixed up in the theatre was like somebody in a slave camp. In those days a good run for a play was two nights. Anything over this was sensational. Shakespeare, accordingly, would dash off *Macbeth* on Sunday night for production on Monday, and on Tuesday morning at six o'clock round would come

Burbage in a great state of excitement and wake him with a wet sponge.

"Asleep!" Burbage would say, seeming to address an invisible friend on whose sympathy he knew he could rely. "Six o'clock and still wallowing in hoggish slumber! A dog's life, that of the theatrical manager. Don't I get no service and co-operation? Good heavens, Will, why aren't you up and working?"

Shakespeare rubs his eyes.

"Oh, hullo, Burb. How are the notices?"

"Never mind the notices. Don't you realise we've gotta give 'em something tonight?"

"What about *Macbeth*?"

"*Macbeth* finished its long and successful run last night, and if you haven't something to follow we'll have to close the theatre. What have you got?"

"I've not got anything."

"Then what do you suggest?"

"Bring on the bears."

"They don't want bears, they want a play."

So Shakespeare would heave himself out of bed, dig down into the box where he kept other people's plots, and by lunchtime with Burbage popping in all the time with his eternal "How ya gettin' on?" he would somehow manage to dash off *Othello*. And Burbage would skim through it and say "There ain't no doubt but what it'll need a lot of work," but he supposed it would have to do.

A playwright cannot give of his best under these conditions, and this, I think, accounts for a peculiarity in Shakespeare's work which has escaped the notice of many critics—to wit, the fact that while his stuff sounds all right, it generally doesn't mean anything. There can be little doubt that, when he was pushed for time, William Shakespeare just shoved down anything and trusted to the charity of the audience to pull him through.

"What on earth does 'abroach' mean?" Burbage would ask, halting the rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet*.

"It's something girls wear," Shakespeare would say. "You know. Made of diamonds and fastened with a pin."

"But you say, 'Who set this ancient quarrel new abroach?' and it don't seem to me to make sense."

"Oh, it's all in the acting," Shakespeare would say. "Just speak the line quick and nobody'll notice anything."

And that would be that, till they were putting on *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, and somebody had to say to somebody else, "I'll fetch thee with a wanion." Shakespeare would get round that by pretending that a wanion was the latest Court slang for cab, but this gave only a brief respite, for the next moment they would be asking him what a "geck" was, or a "loggat," or a "cullion," or an "egma," or a "punto," or a "span-counter," and wanting to know what he meant by saying a character had become "frampold" because he was "rawly." It was a wearing life, and though Shakespeare would try to pass it off jocularly by telling the boys at the Mermaid that it was all in a lifetime and the first hundred years were the hardest and all that sort of thing, there can be little doubt that he felt the strain and that it affected the quality of his work.

So I think that Chicago woman ought to try to be kinder to Shakespeare. Still, awfully glad you like my stuff, old thing, and I hope you don't just get it out of the library. Even if you do, 'At-a-girl, and cheers.

Concessional

SHEIKS of the Desert, loved of old,
Lords of the far-flung petrol line,
Inked in whose awful hand we hold
Agreements you were glad to sign:
Masters of Camels, aid us yet
And don't forget! And don't forget!

Dim with the dust your honour lies,
Infirm the faith and false the heart,
The future outlook terrifies
The parties of the second part:
Sultans of Asia, don't forget
And aid us yet! And aid us yet!

If led by hate or lured by greed
You make the ancient memories void,
And turn towards the bruised reed
We shall be hurt—and much annoyed:
Khans of the Desert, aid us yet
And don't forget! And don't forget!

EVOE





"As if we didn't know they're the older university..."

“Ha Ha!” Chort-led Nig-ger

By ROBERT GRAVES

“I’VE given up the old rag in utter disgust,” growled Haymon Fugg, Q.C. “And you, Admiral?”

Admiral of the Fleet Sir St. Clair Fopp - Jalopy sighed uncomfortably. “It’s a little difficult for an old salt like myself to break the habit of a lifetime, my dear fellow, and I still hope it may not come to that. After all, they’ve not gone Walt Disney yet; show no signs of it either, praise be! However, as I was telling you, I did write Fleetway House a couple of stingers, on Club notepaper, too, and got two quite civil, though not altogether satisfactory, replies. The editor at least did me the courtesy to answer in his own fist—not one of those jelligraphed form-letters—to the effect that analysis of the correspondence received (mainly, he admitted, from the Sex) showed 83 per cent in favour of permanent substitution. Last night I wrote to Rupert direct, hadn’t done such a thing since the second year of the Peacemaker’s reign! Maybe he’ll be able to arrange matters for us.”

“Not a hope, I’m afraid, Admiral. In my opinion, Rupert’s been quietly dethroned by a palace revolution. Because he made the journal what it is, and named it too, they couldn’t decently rob him of that column; but anything he and his friends do is only back-page stuff now.”

“Still in full colour, you must admit.”

“Oh, yes, still in full colour... Clearly, there was no immediate course between that and liquidation. It would have been going a bit too far to print them in red in the middle page, along with Fay and Eddie and similar riff-raff.”

“Fay and Eddie, riff-raff? Choose your words, please, Fugg! I couldn’t disagree with you more strongly.”

“Very well, ‘riff-raff’ is unreservedly withdrawn. But I shall, with the very greatest respect, characterise Fay and Eddie as caviare for the Admiral.”

“I gladly accept your rectification. Well, let us agree that Rupert may be slipping, like ‘Nyet’ Molotov; but surely he still has a deal of pull in the Fleetway House Politburo? Probably owns quite a block of shares, don’t you think?”

“I wonder... And I also wonder (forgive me) whether a commendable

loyalty to the Senior Service has not perhaps coloured your judgment on the whole shocking affair?”

“A little hard on me, aren’t you, Fugg? I confess that it could have been worse if our old Ethiopian friend had elected to become a damned pongo or an Air Force erk, instead of a red-haired matelot; but I am hardly the man to be swayed by sentiment in a case where tradition has been so wilfully flouted.”

“To revert for a moment. You must have noticed that pressure has recently been exerted on Rupert to make him omit the hyphens in his two- and three-syllabled words, and change his familiar form of address. ‘Hullo, boys and girls!’ indeed! A disgusting neologism! They’ll be changing the name of the paper next.”

“Wouldn’t dare. Remember that sensational drop in circulation when the

old *Nineteenth Century* tried to give itself a new look? No, you’re a little too young perhaps... But I can still hear the angry sputter of my father’s quill pen when he resigned his subscription.”

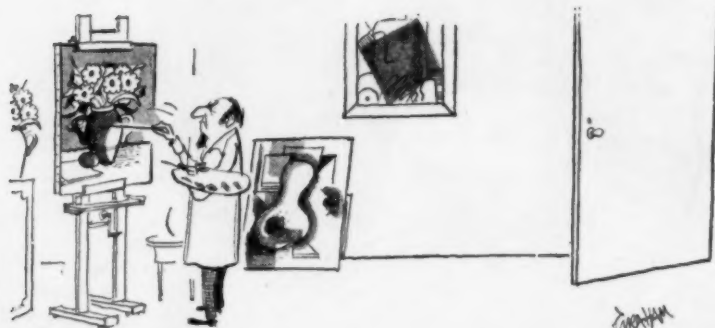
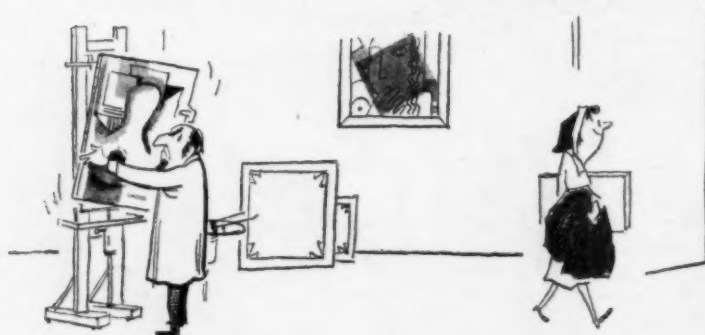
“Quill pen in 1900?”

“Yes, indeed. My father was one of Her Majesty’s Inspectors of Schools under the Board of Education, and every year around April 1st they dealt him out not only sealing wax and red tape but packets of goose-feather quills; and a little black penknife, every five years, to trim them with. However, what do you think of this... this... transmogrification? Colour prejudice?”

“That, I fear, may be the correct diagnosis, Admiral. First, we had the Mau-Mau trouble, then this friction in our ports and industrial centres due to the influx of cheap and unrestricted West Indian labour. And it cannot have



“One good thing, this H.P. squeeze will give us a breathing space...”



escaped your attention that our poor saucer-eyed blackamoor hero is said to have undergone his denigration—no, that's the wrong word; should I say *catamelanesis*?—because of a confessed inferiority complex about his complexion. Yet I cannot quite take that statement *au pied de la lettre*. He had all our hearts, and knew it."

"Indeed he had. Personally, I never thought of him as one of what Kipling used undemocratically to call 'the lesser breeds without the Law.' Golly was Nature's own gentleman, and if he had an ugly mug, why, I'm no beauty myself; and if you'll forgive me..."

"Certainly, Admiral, I too have a face like a clumbungus..."

"Thank you kindly! My point is that Rupert cannot have been consulted in the matter. He would never have let down the journal with such a bump. And the girl's unhappy too—you can read it in her face.... Look here, I believe with the help of fellow-chicks in the Savage and White's and perhaps the Athenaeum, and the Rag of course, we could put pressure on the top brass at Fleetway House to set that damned spell in reverse, and get the poor fellow back again as he used to be? We might also have a smack at restoring the hyphenization, while we're about it."

Major Spinks, a garrison gunner, who was acting Club Secretary, coughed apologetically from a nearby armchair. "Don't want to butt in on a private discussion, gentlemen, but the fact is, I felt equally bad about this how-d'ye-do—at first. Then I had a word with Doubleday Durkin, who keeps his private line to the Street. Apparently, the case is even worse than you suppose. What happened seems to have been that Rupert Chick took Betty out to a night-club, with Nigger, Stripey and the rest of the Soho gang. There she danced with a very personable young member of the Lower Deck and fell for him like a ton of chocolates. Our Golly, of course, felt more than a trifle peeved and, being already a bit high, threw a gin-and-tonic in her face. The sailor then landed him one on the mark. Betty giggled and asked: 'What price the Black Hope?' The next thing, the rivals began breaking chairs on each other; but Golly is as tough as they come and the sailor got hospitalised. Betty, just like a woman, announced that she was through with Golly for ever



and would rather die than go through the farce of pretending that she wasn't, just to soothe the pie-faced public. Doubleday reports harrowing days at Fleetway House, with talk, even, about the paper folding up. Betty had meanwhile issued a statement; said she loved the sailor boy heart and soul and would cancel her contract unless their friendship were officially recognised. She also accused Golly of submitting her to forty years of mental cruelty. Rupert Chick got into fearful hot water for first introducing Betty to the other fellow and then not intervening in the rough house. He pleaded bumble-foot, but they nearly threw him out on his ear, all the same. At last, late on Monday evening, only a few hours before *Chicks' Own* hit the stands, some clever type—I believe it was Eddie of 'Fay and Eddie'—thought up this ingenious story of a kind fairy waving a wand and changing Golly into Sailor Boy. Fooled me, fooled you, fooled all of us! Meanwhile Golly has turned Trappist monk and can't be reached by phone or letter; he's just trying to forget, Doubleday says. So now we see Betty and the Sailor Boy at their carefree domestic antics, in full

colour on the front page. Seems to me the acme of bad taste. Apparently she's bought him out of the Navy."

No comment came from the Q.C., none from the Admiral. They waited stony-eyed until the Major had cleared his throat three or four times and finally shuffled off with some excuse about seeing a librarian about a book.

The Admiral broke the silence at last. "I don't know whether an action lies, my learned friend—that's for you to say. My guess would be a clear case of slander: hatred, ridicule, contempt, and all the trimmings. Moreover, what this insufferable pop-gun-wallah—calls himself an acting Secretary—relays from that thundering ass Fiddlehead Durkin isn't worth a moment's thought; between you and me, both of them are secret *Tiger Tim* fans!"

Inflation Note
"WELSH PUBLIC BODIES
GET CIRCULAR."
Western Morning News
333

Wait for it!

"In Eastern Chiapas are found Tzotzil, Tzeltal, Chaneabal and Chuh . . . Maya speech is musical and pleasant . . . Glottal stops (a sort of catch in the breath like the bark of a sergeant-major) are frequent."—J. E. S. Thompson, *"The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization."*

TZOTZIL and Tzeltal, Chancabal and Chuh
Are the loveliest languages ever I knew:
It's rather a pity that practising them
Requires recourse to the R.S.M.

You 'orrible little native,
Show me them skulls you found—
Pick 'em up: and in usin' the dative
Keep those eyes orf the ground!

'Ere—get fell in, that Indian!
Your dressin' ain't too neat,
But the way you 'erbs constructs your
verbs,
Strewth—it's a regular treat!

Quetzal and tapir, chihuahua and quail
Disappear fast down the tropical trail—
Scared by a Briton expressing his view
In Tzotzil or Tzeltal, Chaneabal or
Chuh. ANTHONY BRODE



Of course it'll be the ruin of us—our *l'heure de l'apéritif*. Lazy lot! Always with an hour to spend watching workmen to see if they'll work! Striking! Week-ending! Reading *The Times*! Co-operating! Commuting! Whistling! Going to the dogs!

Going to the dogs, that's us. But I do enjoy my elevenses.

Sitting, say, in the shop window next to White's and "watching it rain on the damned people"—as it did once for Lord Alvanley next door—and seeing the damned people shove in to buy cakes or sit at the shiny-topped tables: being in fact damned myself, rain-spotted and self-served, with my pale English cup of coffee to warm me.

There's the tender mauve of the street beyond; we look out of our bright state-room that has struggled away from marble and not yet succumbed to chromium; the mirrors—lest self-admiration should soar—are half pasted over with new lithographs:

a porter walks through, bearing on his head a tray of pink and green cakes; an umbrella drips by a radiator; cigarettes wave, cups are lifted, there's a hum of quiet talk as people stray in and out.

My table is nearest the door, furthest from that queue-pen where they shuffle slowly with trays alongside the stock counter. Please not to smoke while passing the Food, says a notice; but there's nothing about squeezing three rolls before selecting a fourth, and this—when I was working my way along—the man in front did. I tried to nip ahead—good queue practice—having no tray, no interest till the coffee urn, but with his right elbow he barred me, while the left hand lifted flap after flap of the big warm cabinet to explore mysterious contents. So slow was our progression past Toasted Goods and Beverages that it must have been hard indeed for those with trays not to take something—even if it were only the thinnest of Welsh rabbits with leopard markings, a tiny blackcurrant punch. I would much

rather, myself, this tantalising crawl than the dangers of a conveyor-belt which in some places rolls on with one's tray, which must be followed at a brisk pace, and all the components of a meal snatched in passing; and one's already paid, so there's no shirking; I always expect someone to fling himself on the tray with a shriek and. . . Why, even here a fat woman got carried away, and had to hark back for something—a medallion of butter—thus, when she thrust on again, provoking a sharp "Where are you off to, Madam?" "I was—er—only—" "We're a queue, you know!" "Yes, I know, but—" We had to explain to him.

We are a mixed lot: workmen in caps and denims, youths and girls hatless and coatless, the more dignified clerk or senior assistant, a bookie (no mistaking that weather-beaten charm) opposite two typists with the giggles, businessmen seeking the emphasis of hand play, a traveller and his briefcase, an eager little dress-maker (is she?) fetching responsive smiles from



one with the Fuller Figure (surely that doughnut is a mistake), a cropped American who might have dropped off the back of any train but for his slung camera, an old geezer with two hats and two—no, three—coats, champing his way with innocent glee through thin bread and butter.

For the moment I am alone. One never quite knows who will turn up. Once it was an old schoolfellow whom I hadn't seen since he passed me his crib of Demosthenes, and earned me a flogging; though in no essential changed, he was now a beaming Master of the Supreme Court. Another time a courteous old man sat down and immediately made a remark to some invisible companion; a long, if one-sided, conversation followed, there was a quarrel and a making-up, and the two went out together—or so I assumed from gestures attending the exit.

But now to my table comes a gentleman with an individual pie, which without preamble he subjects to the

most ferocious salting and saucing. The pie resists. I gaze over his shoulder. Passing cars, reflective pavements, the drip of rain on umbrellas that make their owners walking lampshades: how charming, how drear, and what would London be without it!

One of the waitresses (if one may still call them that) has a black face and comely movements, and surreptitiously all eyes fasten on her, as on the piccaninny in the doll-shop, most admiring, a few resentful.

Then someone shoots his large coffee on the floor: she wipes up.

Another who has been wandering in a lost way, carrying everywhere a bowl of soup, a doughnut, and an ice-cream finally decides to settle opposite me and next to the gentleman whose treatment of his pie grows every instant more drastic.

More and more people drift in. The queue lengthens. Service laps round like an impersonal tide, wiping one side of a table, carrying off mustard-pots or sugar-pourers. Hats and coats are hung on a silvery cactus thrust

from the wall. Snacks are swelling. Leavings are piling up.

I tilt my chair and catch a glimpse in the mirror of a tragedian with a bun and (more frightening than if he had come direct) a ghoul sitting down to—breakfast!

Knife and fork are poised over two kippers, buttered toast.

And already in the mid-day distance it is borne on me, they are fishing and chipping.

I must fly! Grand guignol is upon us!

Down St. James's and past White's, Chubb's, Lock's, all the expensively preserved past—which, by the way, thank God I never lived in—I glance back.

A fire-engine races past.

Two dogs meet on a pedestrian crossing.

Mr. Gaitskell steps from a car, like a pleased duckling out of its egg.

Everything, everything happens at lunch-time, even—take it or leave it—lunch.

G. W. STONIER



Saga in the Suburbs

The Battery System

EVER since the war it has been axiomatic that the New-Poor Mums of Talkington and other such places are the heroines of modern life. For years we have been ironing, polishing, rubbing our fingers to the bone, gardening, thinking up *recherché* little dishes with a soupçon of garlic for our husbands' and their friends' dinners, and above all queueing for small quantities of very little in the shops. All this has been traditionally accompanied by the scrunching of children's model trains under foot and the gentle moaning of the Third, or at very least the Home Programme in the background. Life for countless years, in fact, has been a constant bedazzled rush to keep up with the children, the mending, the books on Child Psychology, and the educational advantages of our youth—although most of us would be shocked beyond belief at the idea of keeping up with the Joneses.

It is thus with surprise that we discover that the Mums of Talkington have time on their hands. For progress has marched on. The queues and the rationing are no more. Not only are the children at school but nagging and bullying have finally taught them to make their beds, tidy their rooms and put the model trains away. Socks, nowadays, don't need darning because they are made of some miracle yarn or other—there are polishes which repel dust, and machines which gently smooth them on to floors and furniture without expenditure of the welder's energy. Washing is made whiter than white, we all agree,

by machines as well as by Oomph, Buzz and Burp, and at least one Talkington lady has a machine to wash her dishes. True, nobody has yet worked out a mechanical means of hanging up washing or weeding the garden or dusting china ornaments on the mantelpiece, but there is a limit to the time that the modern housewife can spend on such activity without going stark staring mad.

But it must be faced—labour-saving devices save labour. And they have thus taken the heart out of the joy of housewifery. While they certainly dispense with that feeling of eviscerated exhaustion which, before the days of the machine, did so much to provide the housewife with shattered nerves, prematurely grey hair, and the masochistic satisfaction of a job never done, they also tend to remove the comfort of fulfilment. A cake whipped up in two seconds with an electric mixer might just as well, psychologically speaking, be a bought one. The maker, who has not worn her fingers to the bone, beaten her shoulder from its socket, enumerated to herself time and time again the *hours* spent over a hot stove, misses the creative joy as well as the creative exhaustion. Gone is the gratifying immolation of a regular baking day, and sheets and table-cloths, ironed glass-flat by a housewife sitting as dull as ditch-water feeding them into a rotary ironer, are so much dead-end factory work compared with the martyred satisfaction of standing for hours beside an ironing board. There is no longer even the joy of throwing everything down and crying

"I *must* put my feet up and have a cuppa or I shall *die*!" For the modern, efficiently equipped housewife, once the children have gone to school, has all the housework finished and is as fresh as a daisy by lunchtime.

In fact she is left surprisingly with spare time and a surplus of creative energy. Even looking after a husband is not much help. For the worst and most unfeeling of these have been successfully indoctrinated by rationing and queueing and lack of labour-saving gadgets during the war years and concentrated propaganda on Man's Inhumanity to Woman conducted by newspapers in search of women readers. All of them are now completely conditioned to leaping up and helping with the washing-up, fetching the coal, mowing the lawn, and probably even seeing that little Peregrine's ears are really clean.

So some housewives take to culture. Painting classes, amateur dramatics, English Literature, or Economics fill the suburban evenings. It is of course awkward that these things are arranged only at times when housewives could talk to their husbands anyway, but this is taken in their stride as One of Those Things. The air is thick with the rustle of French and German being brushed up, and the less intellectual types, who are studying cabinet making or motor-car maintainance or metal work, fill their houses with useful if expensive gadgets.

Many others, however, insist that the evenings are no problem at all, being



filled by husbands, bridge, etc. Their problem is the long solitary days. So they look for useful outlets for surplus energy and creative zeal, rushing avidly after doing-it-themselves, energetically painting rooms and furniture, dyeing carpets, wallpapering ceilings and the insides of cupboards. Some of them even do it well; in any case it saves money because the husband only has to earn the extra for materials, not the labour as well. They also take up a good deal of time moving furniture into different places—this tends to be unpopular, because the husbands have been propagandised into believing that women cannot lift heavy weights and spoil everything by always asking why it couldn't have been left until they arrived home.

But there is a limit to the amount of paint and wallpaper that can be used, to say nothing of paid for. Really, a lot of Talkington housewives eventually think, what they need is a part-time job. But outside part-time jobs hardly exist in Talkington, and anyhow the newspapers are always telling women to stay at home to keep their children out of the Juvenile Courts. Besides, so many of us have been housewives so long that our shorthand speeds, our draughtsmanship, our teaching genius, or our gift for balancing accounts has atrophied—we don't know how it will be, getting back to routine. Worst off of all are those whose parents only had them trained in Domestic Economy, because cooking and housekeeping jobs, part-time, are just as uncreative as cooking and housekeeping at home, besides not providing husbands to help wash up. And too often the husbands say that though of course they appreciate the wife's craving for creative satisfaction, contact

with the outside world and so on, the fact remains that they are doing pretty well at the moment and the minute the town sees a woman going out to work it leaps to the conclusion that she wouldn't be doing it unless she *had* to.

So the wives meet in the High Street, shopping, and stand talking on the pavement or drop in somewhere for coffee, see the films their husbands wouldn't like anyway, and seasonally go on excursions to the Sales in London. Some of them have the bright idea of speeding up their typing, persuading their husbands to advance them enough on the housekeeping for a second-hand machine, and looking around for aspiring local authors with novels to be typed at home. Others decide that a knitting or sewing machine would be a profitable home occupation, because they will then be able to pick up their work when they're at a loose end. What in fact happens is that for weeks there is no work at all, and the husband grumbles about the instalments on the new machine, and then suddenly there are two novels to be typed or ten sweaters to be knitted, and the wives and their exhausted husbands are kept busy far into the night casting on hundreds of stitches or checking hundreds of pages.

It is a pity, perhaps, that in general the husbands are all so worn out by their daytime labours, and their creative endeavours in the garden or the allotment in the evening, that all they really want to do is to sink into an armchair with the paper, or at most drag themselves to a card table to play bridge. But no doubt when automation comes to the City and the Government Department as well as to the factory and the kitchen, all that too will change.

DIANA AND MEIR GILLON





IT is a nice question with how much of a cheer one ought in these sad days to greet the unseen. We extract from *The Times*' report of the recent foreign affairs debate—and *The Times* was certainly on this point entirely accurate—

Mr. Osborne (C., Louth): Was it not time to recognise that Britain had come down in the world and was no longer the great power she had been? (Opposition cheers.)

Old-fashioned prejudice makes one tend to think that such inconvenient facts, even when they should be faced, ought not to be cheered. But at least we can no longer argue that by not stating them we in any way conceal them from other nations. If we say that we have no sin we perhaps deceive ourselves, but the time has long passed since we had any hope of deceiving anybody else. The brazenly calculated insolence of the dismissal of Glubb Pasha at the very moment when the Foreign Secretary was paying his call in Egypt, or of the riots in Bahrein, is sufficient indication where our prestige now stands. Mr. Selwyn Lloyd could

hardly have been treated worse if he had been an umpire.

The thunder, if thunder there could ever have been, in the Prime Minister's statement on his Washington talks was very effectively stolen by the Russian who occupied the interval between the Prime Minister's return and his statement in the House by unloosing Burgess and Maclean on a press conference. As a result it was the Foreign Secretary that the House was anxious to hear rather than the Prime Minister. Indeed the most notable feature of the present Parliament is the extent to which the Prime Minister has lost the ear of the House. In the foreign affairs debate he made one of his better speeches, but rarely can a Prime Minister, winding up an important debate, have had so small a House to hear him. What secrets Burgess and Maclean may have carried across to the Russians we shall doubtless never know. In all probability they did not amount to very much. But what is so distressing about this wretched case is that every time the authorities assure us that now at last we have been told the full story and every time it appears that there is always still a little more to come out.

Thus Burgess in his statement claimed to have been associated with the Secret Service and with M.I.5. One had hoped that Mr. Selwyn Lloyd would have been able to give the lie direct to these claims. But instead we were told that, though Burgess did not belong to the Secret Service, he belonged to "something called S.O.E." that was not so very different from the Secret Service—though he did not belong to M.I.5, when he was at the B.B.C he used to pass on messages to M.I.5. As Lord Rosebery wrote of Lord Shelburne: "His good faith was always exemplary but always in need of explanation." It was not very satisfactory.

Next Man In?

But the main interest in the House of Commons over these weeks has been in the speculation who will be the Prime Minister's successor. For the moment Mr. Macmillan's stock is rising. The first reaction towards his economic proposals was one of execration. The Liberals, encouraged by their bye-election figures, joined with the Socialists in the outcry. But, by the time that the debate was finished, there were plenty of

people who had at any rate a hope that at last something had been proposed that might check inflation. Whether they are right remains to be seen. It is true that the proposals are still unpopular, and it is true that further bye-election figures show that electors are still voting against the Government, but this to many people is not a bad but a good sign. It is clear that nothing can be effected unless the Government has the courage to do something unpopular and to hurt somebody. The very fact that some people seem to mind what the Government is doing gives a ray of hope that it may be worth while doing it.

The Invaluable Opposition

Yet the Government, through all its blunderings and all its tribulations, has one undepreciable asset—the fact that it has the Opposition against it. Nobody thought that it would take so short a time to demonstrate that Mr. Gaitskell was not capable of uniting the Opposition, and maybe it has not been Mr. Gaitskell's fault that he has failed. But failed he has. His lieutenants are not even up to being lieutenants. Mr. Robens, the Opposition's newly deputed spokesman on foreign affairs, could hardly have been worse in the foreign affairs debate. Colonel Wigg—as Mr. Head very directly indicated—does not become automatically more competent by sitting on the Front Bench—rather the reverse. Mr. Birch did not cover himself with any especial glory in the defence debate, but the noises which the Opposition contributed to that debate were purely zoological.

It is Mr. Shinwell who from the Opposition is most nearly coherent on defence. Mr. Shinwell's argument is that we cannot afford both unconventional and conventional weapons. Therefore, since we have decided to rely on unconventional weapons to keep the peace, we should cut the conventional and abolish or reduce the term of national service. This suggestion has the advantage for a politician of being electorally popular. The Opposition's policy on this, as indeed on so many other topics, is somewhat confusing. Some of them want to scrap the H-bomb. Mr. Shinwell, it seems, wants to scrap everything except the H-bomb. His policy is not necessarily the worse for being at variance with that of his colleagues, but the trouble with reducing

commitments is that it is easier said than done. Evacuate one point and the boys next door stake out their claims that you should leave them, too. Leave Suez and up goes the balloon in Cyprus.

Even Lord Attlee, it seems, cannot quite get out of trouble merely by evacuating. For it is against him rather than against Mr. Gaitskell that Mr. Bevan launches his thunderbolt. Mr. Bevan attacks the way that the Socialist Party is run—the secrecy of the party meeting, the votes there, the obligation on a member to vote the party ticket on the floor of the House, however he voted in the party meeting. All this, he says, is wrong. In fact he demands the Socialist Party should be run in almost every detail exactly as the Conservative Party is now run. All these things which he advocates are exactly what the Conservatives do. Where has Mr. Bevan been recently? When he has pretended

to be down on the farm, has he really been hiding under the desk at the '22 Committee?

The one great thing that has happened during these weeks of interstice in the House of Commons is that the House has voted that we shall not any longer be hanged. The debate followed in general along the familiar lines and was only remarkable for the speech of Sir Lionel Heald, who surely used the oddest argument that has ever been used by an ex-Attorney General. He maintained that there was no miscarriage of justice at the hanging of Evans and Christie. All that was possibly wrong was that Christie ought to have been hanged at that first time of asking, too. But, as Christie was in fact the principle witness for the prosecution, was then referred to as "a perfectly innocent man," and as it was very largely on his evidence that Evans was convicted, it

seems a little odd to treat the fact that Christie was in the witness box rather than in the dock as a trivial and secondary error. Anyway the House gave its vote against hanging, and the future is yet to be seen. Will there be a conflict between Lords and Commons? And, if so, will there be the customary constitutional conference between Lords and Commons to compose those differences? And, if so, who will attend that conference as Leader of the House? Presumably Mr. Silverman. Certainly no member of the Government could have any possible claim to attend in that capacity. Anyway, whatever the rights or wrongs of hanging, at least members have shown that there are some matters on which they insist on backing their opinions with their votes. They have refuted the gibe that they are no more than robots or no more than delegates.

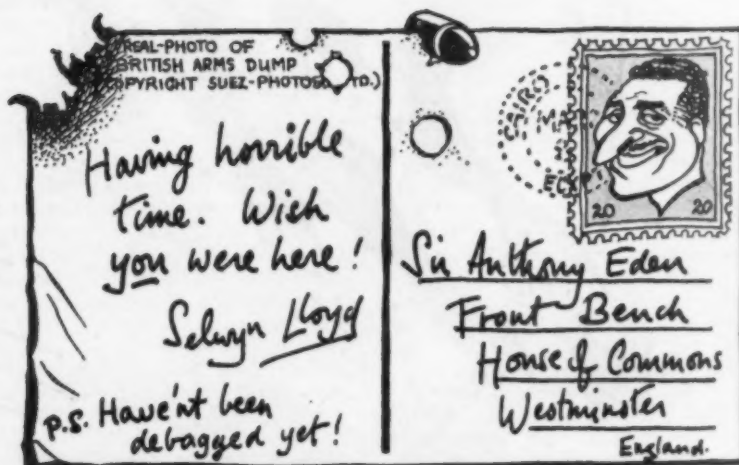
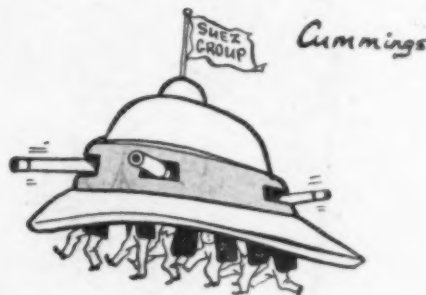
CHRISTOPHER HOLLIS.

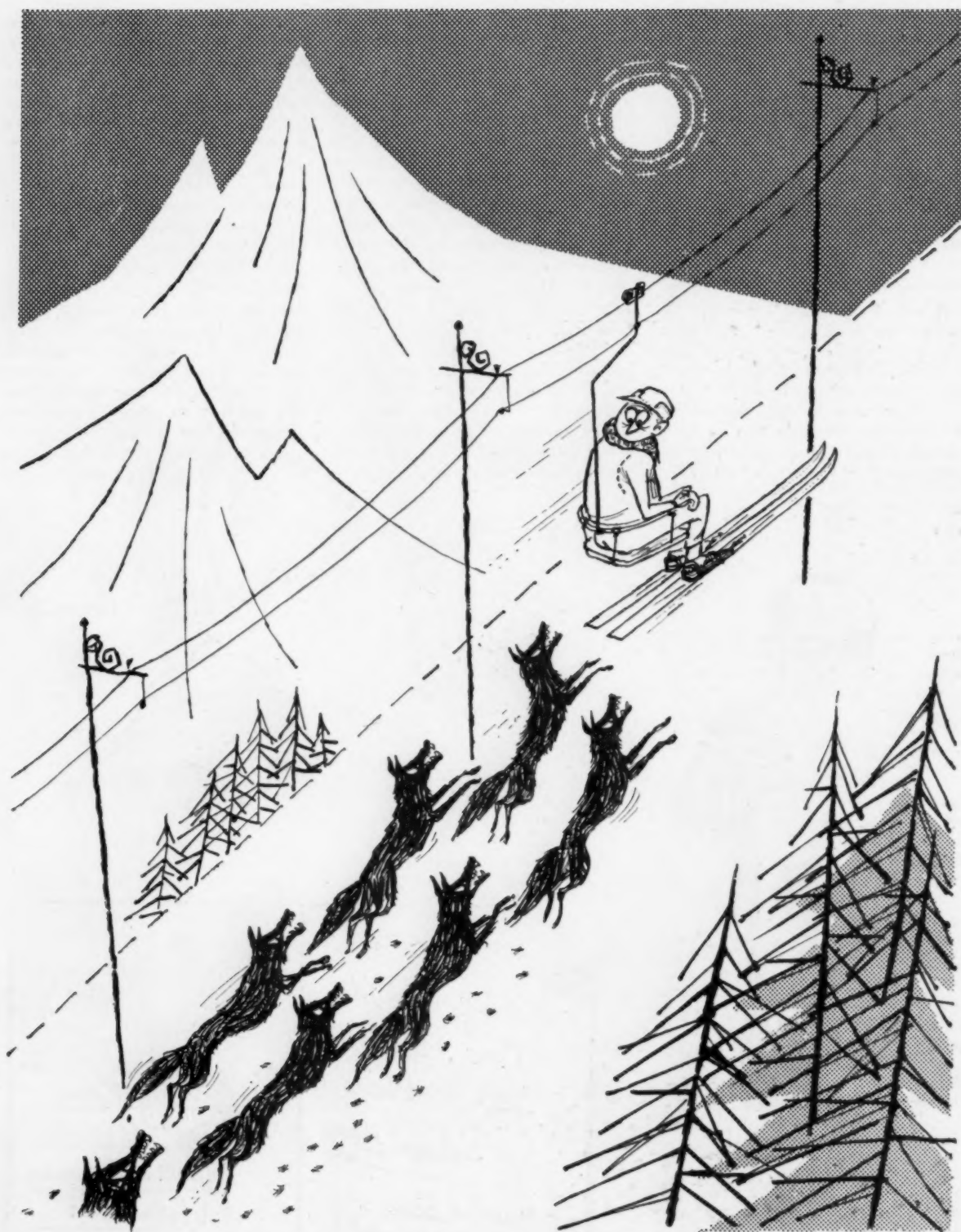


MR. PETER THORNEYCROFT



As one empty vessel
to another . . .





Smilby.



BOOKING OFFICE The O. B.

Victorian Eton and Cambridge: Being the Life and Times of Oscar Browning. H. E. Wortham. *Arthur Barker*, 21/-

WHY this book, which first appeared in 1927, should have been reissued with the above inexplicable title, instead of being simply called, as it was at its original publication, *Oscar Browning*, is a mystery. It purports to be nothing more nor less than a life of Oscar Browning (1837-1923) and is not in any sense a study of Victorian Eton and Cambridge as such, although that school and university provide the background for Browning's career.

However, it is such an excellent book that one must be grateful to see it again, and ignore what is presumably one of those extraordinary notions of the book trade as to what constitutes a "selling title." Thirty years is apt to be an awkward span for authors to surmount. Mr. H. E. Wortham clears it magnificently without the smallest suggestion of his work dating or losing anything of its initial liveliness.

Oscar Browning's story is enthralling for a number of reasons: partly because it shows a group of human beings in one of those intellectual, social and personal tangles from which there is really no way out except through violence—the violence in this case taking the form of Dr. Hornby sacking Browning from his post as an Eton master—partly because Browning's cause, although he himself lost the battle as an individual, has for better or worse undoubtedly won the day.

Browning took up his assistant mastership at Eton in 1860, a date at which the Provost and Fellows had still successfully resisted all suggestion of educational change. The old classical curriculum was untouched. There flourished, however, a group of masters who advocated a new approach. Browning was one of these and appointed himself the chosen instrument of Reform. How he set about this is the subject of the first part of Mr. Wortham's study.

Nothing in life is simple; least of all the question of educational reform and the behaviour of schoolmasters. On the one hand some agreed that it was a good thing to teach history and English literature, even a modicum of French and mathematics, in place of a régime devoted entirely to Homer and the Latin poets. Others felt sympathy



with a view that boys should not be brought up to think athletics the only object of human existence. But Browning's alternatives were not what everybody wished, and, although the parents of the boys at his house seem to have been eminently satisfied with his methods, he drove his colleagues, Wolly-Dod, Warre and the headmaster, Dr. Hornby, to the furthest extremes of irritation.

Finally there was a row about Browning having a boy from Wolly-Dod's house to tea without asking Wolly-Dod's permission. The three-cornered correspondence between Browning, Wolly-Dod and Hornby that resulted from this is, if you enjoy that kind of thing, excruciatingly funny. The boy was none other than George Nathaniel Curzon, future Foreign

Secretary and Viceroy of India. The matter was more or less patched up; but Hornby had taken a decision: Browning must go. He was found to have transgressed a technicality of the rules—house-masters were only allowed forty boys in their house and Browning (and others) had forty-three—and he was summarily dismissed.

Although leaders were written in the newspapers, and a question asked in the House of Commons, there was no appeal. Browning's income was reduced from £3,000 a year, the considerable sum then possible to earn as an Eton housemaster, to £300 as a don at King's. *The Times*, with its habitually fine disregard for financial emoluments, deprecated "disputes among schoolmasters on matters of petty gain" and "exhibitions of temper on trumpery points of profit."

At Cambridge Browning became an established figure. He took up his residence in 1875 and was almost immediately one of the sights of the place. It is the great merit of Mr. Wortham's book that, written with understanding and sympathy, it makes no effort to depict Browning as anything but beyond words exasperating. Although there were no rows at Cambridge on the same gigantic scale as the Eton upheavals, there, too, was much ill-feeling from time to time.

Snobbish and egotistical to a degree few have achieved, silly and indiscreet, often wrong headed and always illogical, Browning remains an entertaining personality, one of those without whom, one feels, life would have been poorer. Whatever his faults, he strikes us as a less dreary figure than his opponents. He was not without wit. When a heckler at a political meeting asked if he was Oscar Wilde's uncle, Browning immediately replied: "Quite untrue, and even if it were, I have yet to learn that the sins of the nephew are visited on the uncle." Mr. Wortham's pages give him the indestructibility of Frankenstein's monster, and one can imagine his dumpy figure, in the manner of his prototype, tricycling (as once he did) in perpetuity over the Alps.

ANTHONY POWELL

The Siege. Arthur Campbell. *Allen and Unwin*, 12/6

This account of a remarkable sixteen-day stand of six hundred men against a complete division of some fifteen thousand Japanese is not completely factual, but the author says he has only resorted to invention where the lack of records makes it necessary. It is a grim war story, often of hand-to-hand fighting, revealing individual deeds of heroism which collectively thwarted the first step towards the long-heralded invasion of India.

It is not a book for the squeamish: the author recounts gruesome details to paint a vivid word-picture of war in its most abhorrent form. He has the ability to relate his story in graphic detail to eulogize the courage of the 4th Battalion of the Royal West Kent Regiment. Some of the crudities invariably heard in serving units could have been omitted without detracting from the revealing nature of the book. A. V.

The Best of Friends. Letters to Sir Sydney Cockerell: Edited by Viola Meynell. *Hart-Davis*, 25/-

Sir Sydney Cockerell in 1940 published a selection of letters from his friends, many of them eminent Victorian writers. Mrs. Viola Meynell has edited a further selection and the book has come under

cross-fire, some critics hinting that Sir Sydney should have collected different friends, others that some of his friends should have stayed in the pigeon-holes allotted to them: that Mr. Siegfried Sassoon, for instance, ought not to have altered the views he so vigorously expressed in 1918. The fact is that Sir Sydney's friends include both lions and lambs; such lions as G.B.S. roar rather mildly and many of the lambs bleat monotonous thanks for hospitality.

Two women dominate the long perspectives: Miss Freya Stark, whose letters would enrich any collection; and Dame Laurentia McLachlan, the Benedictine abbess whose serene and gracious vision extends far beyond her immuring walls. R. C. S.

Peter the Great. Constantin de Grunwald. Translated by Viola Garvin. *Douglas Saunders with MacGibbon and Kee*, 21/-

This short, popular biography covers every aspect of Peter the Great's reign with elegance and verve. It manages to direct attention to the geographical and economic substructure of Russian history without spoiling the picturesqueness of its surface. Like most books on Russian subjects, it is making a point about the "real" Russia; but it strenuously tries to be fair to all shades of historical opinion.

AT THE PLAY



Cranks (St. MARTINS)

USING four clever young artists, a ladder, a string of sausages, two hat stands, a chest of drawers, a bird cage, bright screens by JOHN PIPER and almost no dialogue, JOHN CRANKO has devised with ingenuity a mildly surrealist revue. *Cranks* depends on mime, ballet, song and the unexpected; at times embarrassingly simple, it has some very

winning moments. A girl haunted by sinister uncles enjoys the rare satisfaction of seeing them turned into bats; a man singing loudly about nature is bandaged in a businesslike way from toe to scalp, and then carried off, a still singing cocoon. ANNIE ROSS, ANTHONY NEWLEY, HUGH BRYANT and GILBERT VERNON project this odd little entertainment resourcefully. E. O. D. K.

England has only recently begun to swing back towards the French tradition of learned popularization and one cannot help a feeling that a book of this kind, lacking even a short book-list, is suspect, at least until it has been approved by the technical historians. This kind of wariness can be carried too far. The author's previous biographies can perhaps be allowed to vouch for this one. In places the translation exudes the ingenuous enthusiasm of a guide book produced for English visitors by a foreign city. Some of the illustrations, especially those of St. Petersburg, are charming. R. G. G. P.

Marie Corelli. The Story of a Friendship. William Stuart Scott. *Hutchinson*, 16/-

The Rev. Stuart Scott's lush Corellian entertainment is really, basically, one of those dreadful warnings in which friendship's dangers are most plainly described. It is also an instruction, a guide to a best-selling novelist's reader. It would perhaps be over-estimating Mr. Scott's professionalism to compare his reminiscences to Hall Caine's portrait of Rossetti: Mr. Scott is no "cuckoo in the Pre-Raphaelite nest," neither is he entirely the worm that turned, because he remained to observe and to record these infinitely detailed memories of Marie Corelli's unfortunate, fantastical and egocentric manners. About the work Mr. Scott stands firm; gallantly he sticks to his enthusiasm. Intolerable she may often have been, as instances so plentifully recorded show throughout Mr. Scott's valentine. No one need be disappointed by Mr. Scott's Marie Corelli: she remains the great comic literary character we have ever wished her to be. K. D.

The Last Run South. Robin Hiscock. *Longmans*, 12/6d.

Mr. Hiscock's first novel bears, in the details of shipboard routine and shore leave in foreign ports, the stamp of authenticity to be expected from a writer who, at the age of twenty-six, is himself an experienced seaman. The story is, unfortunately, far less convincing, especially in its middle and penultimate phases: the romantic-sentimental interlude between a convent-educated prostitute and the tough, crypto-quixotic, A.B. hero, in a South American republic on the eve of its seventh revolution, is reminiscent of Paul Hervey Fox's *Sailor Town*; while Big Jay's abortive attempt to hijack the President's private funds, which forms the climax, gives the impression of having been written with a view to possible screen adaptation.

Nevertheless, the author shows definite promise, though the clarity of his laconic style is sometimes marred by such confusing sentences as that describing the sadistic Mate: "Broad-backed, short in the leg, Collins could see a black cigar raking up from the side of the heavily-jowled face." J. M.-R.

Criticism

AT THE PICTURES



Survey. (Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews.)

Richard III (29/12/55) is, after all, still available in London: it merely transferred to another cinema. I write too long beforehand to be certain about other London shows, but probably you will find *Les Grandes Manœuvres* (25/1/56) still going. Releases are beginning to catch up: several films not yet re-

viewed here are already released, including *The Man Who Never Was*, *The Rose Tattoo* with MAGNANI, and *Ali-Baba* with FERNANDEL. A very mixed trio, and not comparable in "importance," but I found all three enjoyable.

RICHARD MALLETT

ON THE AIR



Some people enjoy TV variety... others love sport... or the drama



Some adore parlour games... the News... documentaries...



... even the weather reports
... but nobody, I fancy, could possibly find a good word to say for all those ghastly give-away programmes.

Bernard Hollowood



DOUGLAS

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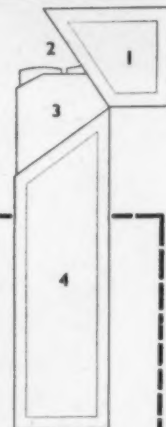
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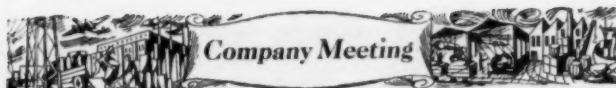
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Company Meeting

REVERTEX LIMITED

RECORD SALES AND PROFITS

MR. D. H. SCOTT'S REVIEW

The thirty-second annual general meeting of Revertex Ltd. was held on March 15 in London, Mr. D. H. Scott, C.B.E., chairman and managing director, presiding.

The following are extracts from his statement circulated with the report and accounts for the year to September 30, 1955:

I am happy to be able to report that once again our Company has had a very satisfactory year. The volume of sales and the net profit have both risen to new high levels. Sales of Emultex (polyvinyl acetate emulsion) have shown a satisfactory increase and we are steadily developing new uses for this material. Our second factory at Harlow, to which I referred in my speech last year, was completed in the Spring. By a fortunate coincidence in timing, we were able to make a large part of it available for the Harlow Industrial Exhibition before we moved in ourselves. This exhibition was opened by Sir Frank Lee, of the Board of Trade, and proved a great success. Many of the visitors were surprised at the wide variety of products which are now made in Harlow and our own stand was generally admitted to be one of the best.

The development of Alcotex (polyvinyl alcohol) has proceeded steadily and I am glad to say that this product is now making a small contribution to our trading profit. Work will shortly be started on a third factory unit at Harlow to house new plant for its manufacture, which should enable us to increase output very considerably. Sales of Revertex and Revultex were maintained in spite of the substantial increase in the price of rubber.

The area of Central Johore, in which we are mainly interested, is still unsettled. Our staff has worked extremely well under these difficult conditions and I am glad to say that the output of our plants has not been appreciably affected.

ACCOUNTS

For the year under review the profit before tax amounted to £467,007 as compared with £438,577 for the previous year and £302,493 for the year before that. The net profit, after making full provision for taxation, was £234,007 as compared with £190,077 and £101,993 for the two preceding years.

On the advice of our Auditors we have revised the rates of depreciation. Until now depreciation has been charged at the rate of 20 per cent. per annum on the original cost of plant and machinery acquired since the war and in view of the disturbed conditions in Malaya the same rate has also been applied to factory buildings in that country.

It has become clear, however, that much of the plant which has been installed in our factory at Harlow will have a longer life than five years. In the accounts under review we have therefore applied a reduced rate of depreciation to this plant which will have the effect of writing it off completely in ten years instead of five. For the reasons mentioned we have continued to apply the 20 per cent rate to plant, machinery and factory buildings in Malaya.

DIVIDEND AND PROSPECTS

The Directors recommend the payment of a final dividend of 15 per cent., less tax, making with the interim dividend of 10 per cent., less tax, paid last November, a total of 25 per cent, less tax for the year. The total dividend of 25 per cent, less tax on the increased capital, will absorb the sum of £59,297 net, and after allowing for the £137,500 capitalized last year, unappropriated profits will be increased by £37,210 to £389,887. In addition, continuing the policy of bringing the issued capital gradually into line with the real capital employed in the business, the Directors propose to issue to the present shareholders 165,000 new Ordinary Shares of 5s. each, credited as fully paid, in the proportion of one new share for every ten shares held. This will involve the capitalization of £41,250 of the unappropriated profits of £389,887.

Our business continues to expand, but competition is keen and the margin of profit is less than it was last year, with the result that, for the first quarter of our current year, although our turnover has increased the net profit is about the same as the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

The report was adopted.

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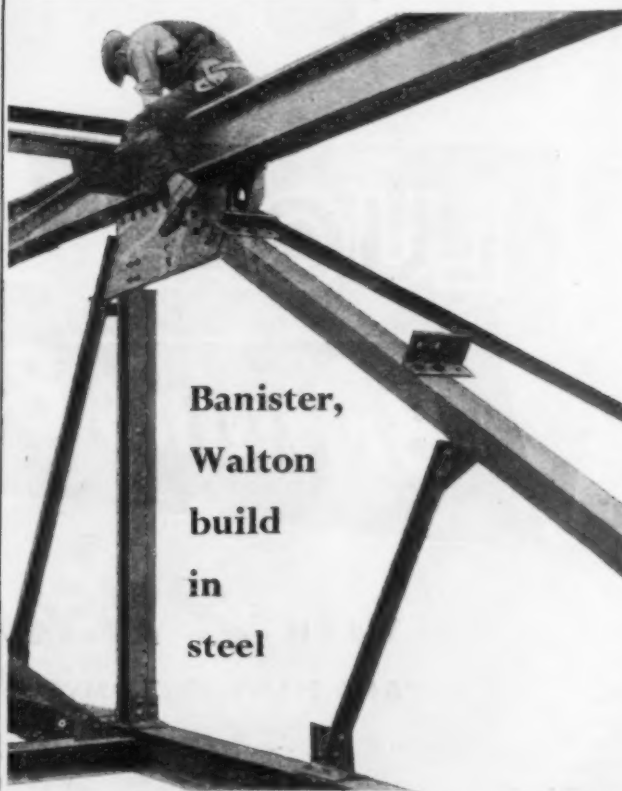
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